

Answers to Questions about the Valley Junction Master Plan RFP

1. In Submittal Requirement A. 7. (page 4), how do you define the 'owner/user references' required for each team member? How should these references differ from the Project Experience references noted in A. 4. (page 3)?

Answer: For A7, we would like three references listed for each person on the project team. It is not required that the reference knows the team member from doing work similar to the Valley Junction Master Plan, but that is preferred. (We can still ask questions about responsiveness, accuracy, ability to work with the public, etc.) For A4, we would like examples of similar projects done by the firm/team with an explanation as to how the team member contributed to the project.

2. Could you provide additional background on the attitude, use, and awareness study being conducted by Neighborhood Development Corporation (page 5)? Questions about that study include:
 - a. What are the study objectives and the anticipated work products?
 - b. What are the outreach plans for this study?
 - c. What study methods will be used?
3. What are the deliverables expected from NDC? It seems that several of the plan items on Page 5 in the Scope of Services relate to work that will be performed by NDC. Is this assumption correct?
4. Scope item #3. Is the city seeking a broader perspective on the regional/national economic trends to supplement the market analysis by NDC?
5. What is the anticipated completion time for the work being done by NDC? Is the scope of their work available for review?

Answer: In answer to questions 2, 3, 4, and 5, attached is the description of services received from NDC.

We do not expect that the NDC product will replace the plan items on page 5.

Yes, the City is expecting a broader perspective on the regional/national economic trends.

6. The housing and commercial markets are noted as study topics. Does commercial refer specifically to retail, office, and industrial, or does this include market research for the Innovation Zone?

Answer: Commercial refers to retail and office. We do not expect any market research to be done for industrial uses or for the Innovation Zone.

7. What aspects of housing are being considered, for example links to employment or similar projects to Phenix (page 7)?

Answer: All types of housing are being considered. The RFP specifically mentions 2nd story housing, but we are not limited to that. There is a lot of residential land

within the Study Boundary. We are open to recommendations from the chosen consultant on a variety of housing issues: programs promoting owner-occupied housing; additional multi-family housing, whether that is new apartment buildings, townhomes, etc.; live/work units. We also need to know if the amount of residential land is too much/not enough. Community Housing Initiatives (CHI) is working on the Phenix project. This RFP is not about the Phenix project; it was only listed in the RFP as context.

8. How do you envision these market study results integrating with the 13 Plan elements listed on page 5, including the use and economic analyses?

Answer: We want the market study to be used as a basis for recommendations. If there is no market for certain commercial uses or housing types or the market can't bear additional commercial or housing uses, we don't want the consultant to recommend them.

9. Much of the study area is residential – is there an active neighborhood organization or organizations?

Answer: The City does not have officially recognized neighborhood associations with defined boundaries and specific City staff assigned to work within them as some cities do. However, there is a Valley Junction Residents Association that is self-formed. City staff typically do attend their meetings (usually police officers) at their request.

10. Has the City used a Charrette process on any past projects, and if so, was it successful?

Answer: No, the City has not used a Charrette process.

11. Does the cover letter and table of contents page count as part of the 20 page limit?

Answer: Cover letter and table of contents do NOT count as part of the 20 page limit.

12. Page limit: 20. Are the 20 pages double-sided (40 page faces) or 20 page faces (20 single-sided or 10 pages double-sided).

Answer: The page limit is 20 page images – either 20 single-sided pages or 10 double-sided pages.

13. If we choose to include “other completed projects (representative samples)”, do we need to include the same information that is required of the last three completed projects or can they be presented in a more summarized form to preserve page space?

Answer: You can present in a summarized form.

14. Is there a desired timeframe for the completion of the Master Plan?

Answer: We do not have a specific time frame for completion of the project. We want the project done well with plenty of opportunity for public input. We want a good project rather than a quick project. You tell us how long it will take you.

15. What interests and/or concerns prompted the City to undertake the master planning process at this time?

Answer: There is no crisis. We feel that the Valley Junction area is doing well. There are few vacancies in the commercial area. Much of the declining housing stock was replaced after the 1993 flood. However, we know it can be better. We think there is ample opportunity for Valley Junction to become an even stronger commercial and residential area. We also know that Valley Junction represents the historical beginnings of West Des Moines, and that it is important to invest in it. This is not a situation where there is a huge problem and we're asking a consultant to come fix it. This is a situation where a City wants to look at an important area of the City and figure out what can be done to make it great.

16. The overall project boundary is expansive covering a range of residential, commercial and park and open space areas. Exclusive of the Valley Junction commercial core, are there specific locations or pockets where the City has long-term concerns about the condition and viability of existing uses?

Answer: During staff discussion about this project, most of the conversation centered around improvements to commercial and residential areas, in general. We recognize that a specific recommendation may be used throughout all residential areas or throughout all commercial areas. The only long-term concern is that there seems to be a lot of rental property in the single family residential area.

We do not need a park plan for Legion Park (4th St and Vine St) as it has been recently renovated. It is included in the Study Boundary simply as an amenity that could be used to strengthen connections within the residential areas.

17. Does the City anticipate establishing a steering committee or other group to oversee the preparation of the Master Plan?

Answer: Yes. We thought about starting to form the Steering Committee now, but then decided to wait until the consultant was chosen so we could work with them on how they would like to gather input from stakeholders. We expect the chosen consultant will want a Steering Committee (as we do), but we are open to other arrangements for oversight/input.

18. Will the Plan and Zoning Commission review the draft plan and will it ultimately be adopted by the City Council?

Answer: Yes. The Planning and Zoning Commission will review the Plan and Council will adopt it.

19. What existing plans and studies exist that address the Valley Junction area and the City of West Des Moines in total? If any exist, are they available through the City's web site?

Answer: There are two previous studies available on the City's website: the 2010 Valley Junction Market Strategies Plan and the 1999 Valley Junction Streetscape Plan. They are listed with the RFP on the City's website: www.wdm.iowa.gov under "Business/RFPs & Bid Postings" or there is a button under the photo banner called ""RFP & Bids." (Link: <http://www.wdm.iowa.gov/business/rfp-bid-postings>) If you click under "Consultant for Valley Junction Master Plan" they are listed at the bottom after the RFP. The City's Comprehensive Plan can be found under "Government/Development Services/Comprehensive Planning. (Link: <http://www.wdm.iowa.gov/government/development-services/comprehensive-planning>)

20. We realize much has been done to protect the area from flooding of the Racoon River and Walnut Creek. What plans or other documents exist pertaining to remaining flood risk in the area? Specifically, what has been done and what, if anything, remains to be done to improve storm and sanitary sewers in the area?

Answer: Yes, many things have been done to protect the area from flooding. We do not expect consultants to address anything pertaining to that with this RFP.

21. As part of its rental housing inspection program, does the city maintain an inventory of residential rental property and condition reports that will be available for use during the project?

Answer: Yes. The City will be able to provide a map that shows where rental housing is located within the Study Boundary. We do not have a program that measures the condition of the housing.

22. Scope item #6. Will the project include a plan for façade improvements? If so, to what level of detail?

Answer: The City has not declared that we need a façade improvement program, however, it is within the realm of possibility that one is needed. We are looking to the consultant to make recommendations on what types of programs (façade improvement programs among them) would be beneficial to the area.

23. Besides "communicating a vision for the redevelopment of the area to ensure it remains a vital part of the City of West Des Moines," are there more specific plan objectives or goals you are looking to implement?

Answer: We feel that Valley Junction is poised to become the next "hot" neighborhood in the Des Moines area. (See answer to #15.) We want to actively look at the area with experts in their fields to determine how best the City should expend its resources (money and staff time) to further improve this area.